

SARAH by Bill Loguidice

Sarah was excited by the prospect of jumping back into the holographic synthesizer. Living long-term aboard a space station was not her idea of paradise, but the pay was irresistible, if not the atmosphere. Now her turn was again up to get away from it all, if only for a few hours. As usual, she wanted to simulate a nighttime float in the creaky row boat on the small lake by her old Earth-bound Florida home. The last time she did it, she just laid back and, though the irony was palpable, simply looked up at the stars. While she loved the light breeze that gently rocked the boat, she did not appreciate the simulated insects, with their all too real bites and buzzing about; Sarah had been on that sterile space station a very long time now. Whoever determined that virtual reality would truly fool the senses only if there was genuine environmental interaction, Sarah thought, probably needed to actually get out more. In any case, this time Sarah bent the rules more than a little by getting one of her programmer friends to hack the system for her and override life simulation on her program. Now she could really relax, just her, the boat and those very distant stars. Sarah happily entered the room, ran the program and within a few seconds, ceased to exist.